# BIG FEAT IN OLD MEXICO

Vash Begon Three Hundred Years Ago Nearly Finished.

AN IMMENSE VALLEY DRAINING

Millions of Money and Thousands of Lives Expended -- Vast Area of Valuable Lands Made Tenable as a

From the Mexican Herald.

A great work has been practically finished, the drainage of the Mexican valley, which has required for its completion nearly 200 years and many millions of dollars, and has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of men.

The valley of Mexico is an immens basin, of approximately circular shape with one extreme diameter of about six ty miles, completely bounded by high mountains out of the basin. The surface of this valley has a mean altitude above the sea of 7,413 feet, and an area of about 2,200 square miles. Mountain ranges rise on every side, making s great corral of rock, containing dozens of villages and hamlets, with the ancient capital in the center. In times past the fires of volcanoes licked up the earth, and such fires still live in the mommoth Popocatepetl from whose great maw of sulphur fumes and smoke with jets of flames have poured through the centuries.

The valley thus hemmed in with solid walls of rock had been an inland sea for many cycles, and during the early existence of man here the salt waters spread over a large extent of the depression. The waters have been gradually lessening by seepage and evaporution, and the Axtec pilerims comins from the north in the fourteenth century, having received a sign that they were to build their queen-of-the-world city on a small island of the sea, set about building dikes and combating the overflow of the waters. Many of their works remain to this day, and show that the valley was divided by them into five great departments. The dikes were built under the direction of King Netsahusleqyoti, a relative of the Emperor Monteguma, whose surviving works prove him to have been an engineer whose conceptions and accomplishments would have given him high standing even among modern engineers

ON DRY GROUND. Originally built in the midst of a lake the city has been left on dry grounds by the receding waters. Lake Texacoco some three miles distant-Chalco, and Nochimileo have attitudes nearly four feet greater than the pavement of the capital. Still more imperiously do the lakes to the north dominate the city. San Christobal and Xaltocan are about five feet, while Zumpango is over thirteen feet, above it.

The project now completed is a modification of a scheme projected by Simon Mendez in the time of the Spanish government, which in 1849 was adopted by engineers which accompanied General Scott's army. The tunnel was ultimately located under the saddle and through the ravine of Acatlan, its mouth being near the village of Tequiquiae. The works have been begun several times and then suspended without effecting anything of importance. In 1866 the works now nearing completion were commenced. A project proposed by Senor Francisco de Garay,a well known engineer of the city of Mexico, was pronounced the most feasible. But the revolutionary struggle succeeded, and for many years the work was relegated

In 1879 Engineer Don Luis Espinosa the president director of the works, took charge of the undertaking. In the first period mentioned the cutting of Tequixquale was excavated, and the greater part of the shafts were begun. But at that point the work was stopped by political agitation. The work was really commenced in 1885, when the city council of Mexico submitted a project to the federal government and offered to contribute largely to the cost. President Porfirio Diaz then named a special commission with ample authority to disburse the funds dedicated to the work, and this body up to the present date has directed its execution. The drainage works, now carried out, will receive the surplus waters and sewage of the City of Mexico, and carry them outside of the valley, and it will also control the entire waters of the valley, affording an outlet, whenever found necessary, to those which might otherwise overflow fields and towns, rendering the soil stagnant and marshy. The sewers of the City of Mexico form a on the sides of the streets, these being almost gorges, communicating with a system of secondary sewers that empty into a collecting sewer discharging into the canal of San Lazaro, which transbacks up into the sewers and saturates the soil under the houses and streets. FORT YMILES DONE.

The canal and six-mile tunnel through the mountain range have a total length approaching forty miles. The present works will take rank with the great achievements of modern times, just as the immense "out" of Nochitongo, their unsuccessful prede cessor, was the leader among the anclent earthworks in all the world. The completed system will have cost \$20,

The benefits of these works to the city of Mexico cannot be overestimated. Instead of being one of the healthiest cities in the world, as it should be with its magnificent climate and situation. Mexico, unfortunately, has a terrible heavy death rate, due principally to want of drainage and generally bad sanitary conditions. When the existing danger of floods is removed, and the sanitary evils are remedled by a proper system of drainage, the increased security that will be enjoyed by life and property will certainly have its effect on the prosperity of the city. Property will rise in value, the population will grow with rapidity, not to mention the tide of tourists that will set in from the United States, and this will mean larger revenues for the city.

# EUGENE FIELD'S PRANKS.

The Late Poet Loved Harmless Prac tical Jokes.

When the late Eugene Feld was in Denver, he was concerned in many practical jokes, A lot of young fellows, ready for anything that Field proposed. It was a favorte peetime for Field to get these men togeher and give a din-ner to some sictress who happened to be playing in the city. There was a lawyer in Desver who was known as "the silver-tongued orator of Colorado" and Bird always had him on hand.

At the conclusion of he banquet this the shepherd's basket. The dog barked silver-tongued gentleman would make and set the King's dog a barking also.

a speech which Field had written and would wind up by presenting to the actress a paste diamend which he would state cost some fabulous price. The next day the press despatches would inform the country that Miss Footlight had received a \$10,000 diamond from citizens of Denver.

One of the earliest of Eugene Field's jokes was played on Ell Perkins. Field was a reporter on a St. Joseph paper. Eli came along to deliver a lecture. He called on Field and asked him for a newspaper notice. He expected a column at least, but next morning he simply read: As Eli Perkins will lecture here tonight, all the railroads have aranged to give excursions out of town at greatly reduced rates. Perkins was wild, supposing a great injury had been done him but instead the paragraph attracted so much attention that he had a crowded house.

TOLD AT THE TABLE. Three Short War Stories that May Not Be in the Histories of the Time.

rom the Washington Post. Brimful of funny anecdotes that had no chestmutty flavor was the speach of Gen. St. Clair Mulholland at the Second Corps banquet at the Shoreham Friday night. The Irishman largely preponderated in these anecdotes, of which a couple of specimens from the memory

of a guest will be found below.

McCook's regiment was in front of the enemy, and, expecting to make an attack next morning, he mounted his horse to ride down to the picket line and examine the situation. With this purpose in view he called on a soldier to accompany him and the commanding officer made a detail. McCook was astonished when a little red-headed fellow rode up to him and touched his cap, ready for his service, for he was a mere boy, weighing not more than seventy-five pounds and looking scarcely bigger than the Sharp's rifle he carried "You going with me?" asked Me-

The lad saluted and replied in the affirmative.

"Wo're going right to the front," said the officer. "Do you know that it is very dangerous?"

"Yes; your honor," said the youth.
"Have you been under fire?" inquired "I have, your honor."

"Do you suppose you have backbone to keep up with me wherever I go?" "I'll thry, sit; that'ss why I'm sint

sir. An' if its' heavy tiring an we get a'mong the bullets and we're kilt you vont be in h'-- half a minit before 1 me a-tappin 'at the window." They went to the front.

The second story was located at the hospital. One of 'the chaplain's regiment was very badly wounded and certain to die. But the chaplain was tired -the chaplaies were often tired in the army, you remember and so he went to bed, and he left special word with Sergeant Joe that he was to be called if Barney showed signs of immediate: collapse. When he arose in the morning he was much surprised to hear that Earney had died during the night, He Captain Smith of the corps of American upbraided the watcher with not having roused him in time to administer the last consolations to the dying soldier.

> "Well, to tell the truth, yer highness, I didn't want to disturb you, an' you couldn't hey done nuthin 'for him. Nuthin' could a-belped him. An' when he come to die I consoled him mysilf." "In what way did you console him, sergeant?"

"Well, chaplain, I talked to him gentle like, an' I hil' his hand an' I said to him, Barney, says I. 'I'm afraid you're dyin',

'I think I am,' says he,

" 'An' I expect you'll go below,' says I. " 'I think I will,' says he. " 'Well, Barney, my boy,' says I, 'you

ought to be glad you've got some place Gen. Sickles rarely sits down to a

table with old soldiers without contributing some valuable historical reminiscence. At this same banquet he told "It was, I should think, very early in the winter of '61-2 that, having some business with Gen. McClellan, I walked up one forenoon to his headquarters, in Admiral Semmes' house, epposite the

Arlington. The man on duty said the General was engaged, and asked me to wait. I took a seat, and shortly the secretary of war came in and inquired for the General. An officer came out of the next . som, said the General was busy just then, and asked the secretary successful choirs had agreed to sing of war to take a seat and wait. Mr. Cameron sat down and we fell into conversation. In a few minutes Mr. Lin- ver cup. coin came in and inquired for General McClellan. The officer repeated what he had said to us, that the General was very busy, and Mr. Lincoln would have network of covered channels, located to wait. The president sat down with sometimes in the middle and sometimes us and said. 'All right, I'il wait.' The secretary of war remarked that the president ought in some way to have access to one of his generals. Lincoln threw one leg over the other, as if prepared for a long siege, and said. 'Oh. ports the sewage to Lake Texcoco. If no. It's all right. My time is of no the water is high in the lake the water special value, and the general is engaged in attending to our business. can wait as well as not.' And he fell into his famous story telling, showing not the slightest impatience at the necessity of cooling his heels in the anteroom of a man who was a civilian less than a year before, whom he had ap-

pointed to office. "The incident illustrated," added Gen. Sickles, "two things-first, that Mr. Linoin was one of the most unpretentious of men, and second, that at that time everybody, including McClellan himself, expected McClellan to put down the rebellion." h 15 ---

### WONDERFUL CONTRIVANCE. Was the Original Strasbug Clock -- A Description.

The original Strasburg clock was really a wenderful contrivance. It was constructed in 1570. On its plate was a celestial globe, with the motions of sun, moon and planets. The phases of the moon were presented; and there was a perpetual almanac, the day of the month being indicated by a statue. Every quarter was struck; the first by a child with an apple: the secondby a youth with an arrow; the third by a man with the tip of his staff; and the last by an old man with his crutch. The hour was struck by an angel, who opened the door and saluted the Virgin Mary. Another angel stood by with an hour glass, which he turned when the hour was struck. On the arrival of each successive hour a golden cock flapped his wings, stretched his neck and crowed twice. A clock scarcely less curious was constructed toward the close of the last century by a mechanic of Geneva. It had figures of a negro, a dog and a shepherd. When the clock struck the shepherd played six airs on his flute and the dog approached and fawned up-on him. When being exhibited to the King of Spain by Dros, its maker, the

THE NATIONAL

EISTEDDFOD

and Rhymney Defeated.

THE BUILTH CHOIR WINS THE PRIZE

Many Surprises at the National Eisteddfod of Wales and the Musical Adjudicators Severely Criticised .-Splendid Competitions.

Builth is a small town in Breconshire, South Wales, noted for its many mineral springs, where hundreds of invalids from all parts of the British Isle congregate in summer for the benefit of their health. The town is located on the summit of the Eppynt mountains made famous by Brutus, the great Welsh writer. Builth has been noted for its singing from early times, yet to capture the chief prize at the national eisteddfod of Wales was a great surprise to the musical fraternity, but to those familiar with Builth, and its surrounding environments, its invigorating climate and the culture and musical aptitude of its people, their conquest was not at all surprising. They have every advantage over their competitors from the coal regions of Glamorganshire. Six choirs entered the great competition in the following

1. Linnelly, led by Mr. John Thomas 2. Merthyr, Mr. Dan Davies. Rhymney, Mr. John Price.

Builth, led by Mr. Llew Buallt. 5 Dowlain Mr. Harry Evans. 6. Holyhead, Mr. W. S. Owen.

The competition was for choirs of 150 to 180 voices, the prize being 200 guineas and an English silver lever watch. The test pieces were "Trip We Gaily O'er the Glen," by Jenkins; Where His Loud Voice Spoke in Thunder" by Handley, and "How Sweet the Moonlight Sleeps," unaccompanied. The adjudicators were Messrs. F. H. Cowen, Joseph Bennett, J. H. Roberts and D. Jenkins. The only choir that sang the first piece in Welsh was Holyhead, Mrs. Clara Novello Davis accompanied the Merthyr chofr. Intense excitement prevailed during the contest. It could scarcely have een greeter had the contest taken place in South Wates, but the result was unexpected so far as the greater part of the audience was concerned, although nusicians present were not disposed o express dissent from the verdict, Dowlais, by somet means, got out of une, and, although they sang the first piece splendidly, they were therefore, given up. Merthyr, Rhymney and Holyhead seemed to be the favorites with the audience prior to the delivery of the adjudication, with a very general impression in favor of Merthyr. Still, the singing of each choir was fine, and the keeness of the contest was remarkable. In view of the tension of feeling between Merthyr, Dowlais and Rhymney hundreds of people present rejoiced that an outside chofr should

have been victorious. The announcement of the victory of Llew Bualit and his Builth singers was received with much applause, although t was evident that to thousands present another result had been anticipated The adjudicators stated that they had unanimously, and without hesitation, awarded the prize to the choir that sang all the pieces most artistically, with a beauty of tone, accuracy, naturalness of expression, and general suc-

THE MALE VOICE COMPETITION. was also a rich musical treat, although not quite as good as those of former years. Two prizes were offered, the first being a prize of £42, with a silver cup to the conductor, and the second a purse of ten guiness given by Mr. William P. Hartley, of Liverpool, Eight parties entered the competition n the

following order: 1, Swansea; 2, Mor-riston; 3, Llanfairfechan; 4, Rhondda

5. Bangor; 6, Ffestiniog; 7, Cumber-land, England; 8, Abercarn. The second prize was awarded to Swansea. There was one difficulty, the adjudicators said that had arisen, and that was in regard to the handsome silver cup to the successful conductor, but they were glad to state that the two over during the evening concert in order to decide who should have the sli-

PRESENTATION TO DR. PARRY.

The attendance at the evening concert was enormous, thousands being turned away. Now came the tug of war sang first, and the Rhondda boys second. Cynonfardd stated that this competition was for the silver cup alone. The Maelwyn choir won. The chairman here announced that

they had now a very pleasant and important duty to perform, and that was to present a national testimonal to their great composer, Dr. Joseph Parry. The present was a purse of three thousand dollars. It wil the remembered that Mr. I tears, and the barber was about to em-

Connell, of this city, contributed \$500 towards this purse

THE CHAIR PRIZE

was won by the Rev. Ben Davies, Ystalyfera, near Swansea. Most of the important musical prizes were won by South Wallans.

TOLD BY A MOONSHINER. A Revenue Detective Who Came, but

Did Not Go Away. From the Detroit Free Press. "Sit down, sah-sit down," said the

grim-faced old man to me as we were neturning to his cabin after a visit to the illicit still hidden away in the deep and dark ravine. I sat down on a mound in a little glade in a laurel thicket, while he seat-

ed himself on a rock, and after we had filled and lighted our pipes, he said: "The guv'ment's agin us fur makin moonshine whiskey, but yo' kin see fur you'self how it is. We kin raise co'n about yere, but thar's no market fur it. If we turn it into whiskey, we kin git ome money out o' it, though I never knowed a moonshiner to make over a dollar a day in the best of times. It's est changin' about so we may live, but makin' whiskey is against the law, and the guv'ment hunts us down as if we was wolves. All the whiskey made fur wenty miles around this spot wouldn't ell fur \$200, and yit fifteen men hev been sent to state prison, a dozen mo cept in jail fur months and months and twenty fam'lles bin put to it to sell off everything to pay lawyers. I tell yo', it's wuss nor wah times, with the

"And there's no money in making moonshine whiskey?" I asked. "Yo' see, it's this way," he replied 'Yo' hev to pay cash fur a still. We'uns is pore folks around yere, and five or

dillin'

six men must jine together to buy. It's also agin the law to sell the whiskey, and we must let it go to traders fur what they will pay. It must be toted over the mountings on our backs, and by the time that we've got shet of ten rations and divided up the money, no man has 'nuil to buy a pound o' coffse. If the guv ment was to let us go shead and hev free swing, it would be clus work to make a decent livin'."

"But you were going to tell me about the reverse spice."
"Yes, they cum sneakin' round now and then," he slowly replied! "The last time I saw one was about a y'ar are. He cum along purtendin' to look fur iron and coal, and he stopped over at Joe Rutley's fur a bull week. talked fa'r 'mm', and never once did he say anything about moonshipers but the boys suspishume him and kept their eyes open. The stranger would be out lookin' around all day, but he wasn't arter coal and iron. No sah. That was all a blind. He was jest tryin 'to locate our still, and he was a grave man to cum up yere among us when he knowed what the penalty would be. He must hev travelled around a heap, for it was six or seve lays befo' he hit it right. Joe Rutley follered him for two days and knowed

he wasn't arter coal or iron. "Then he knew you suspected him? asked.

"Reckon not. No, we never let on by word or look. Yo' see, this yers path is the only way to get down to still, and in that bresh heap over thar we had a man to watch. Of a Saturday when to of us wer' down thar at work and the stranger out lookin' fur coal and iron, sunthin' happened. The spy found his nath whar' it starts in by the rocks and knowed that it led to game. The sentinel heard him cumin', though he was on tip-toe, and got ready fur him. Arter & bit the feller showed up right vere in this openin', and looked this way and that, and had a cunnin' smile on his face. Yo' kin see that we had to cut some trees and trim branches, and as the ravine is right down thar', it was easy fur him to figger it out. D'ye see that mark on that chestnut?' "Yes, plainly."

'A'nd the soratch on that soft rock?'

"Wall, he put 'em both thar' with his cutte, so's to make sure when he cum agin. Then he was ready to go. hadnt' follored down into the ravine, but he knew what was thar'." "And so he went away?"

"Yes, his soul went away!" "You-you mean-7"

"But his body stayed right yere!" "You don't mean that he was shot down!" I exclaimed as I rose up. "Yo' are standin right on his grave! said the old man as he knocked the ashes from his pipe and led the way along the path.

ONLY A SINGLE HAIR. But It Was All the GontlemanWanted for Saving the Girl's Tresses. From the Cincinnati Enquirer,

The French people never tire of relating anecdotes of the eccentricity and enormous wealth of Americans. An American went into a hairdresser's shop n Paris recently and found a charming but poorly dressed girl engaged in negotiations with the proprietor. She was offering to sell him her magnificent head of hair for three napoleons—the man would give her no more than one. At last the poor girl gave way with



PICHARD PARKS BLAND. From the Chicago Times Herald. By the Courtesy of H. H. Kehlsaat, ploy the fatal scissors when the Amerian intervened and demanded the cause

He found that the girl's parents, who formerly had been well off, were in the last extremity of poverty, and that she had determined to make so great a sacrifice in order to obtain them a little bread. The stranger drew out two bank "Will you let me buy your hair?" Without even looking at the notes,

the girl at once said, "Yes."

The American del'cately took a single hair, put it in his pocket book-and

Not till he had gone did she look at her bank notes, and found them to be of the value of \$100.

HIS WIFE COULD PLAY POKER. How She Convinced Her Skeptical Husband of that Fact.

It was at a little card party of a few merry acquaintances, and though the stake were absurdedly small, the interest run brenkers high. The pretty wife of one of the players was particularly excited, and played as If the happiness of her whole life was

staked upon the cards. Her husband didn't like her methods. "My dear," he said, as he dealt cards to all the rest, and added none to his own hand,"you ought to watch the players. You play very badly, indeed. Poker is a game that needs careful

Then he raised the man who had bet

and the later threw down his hand, as did all the others except his wife. She guerrillas ridin' about and robbin' and "saw" her husband's bet and "raised" him in return. He looked very black. "There you go again!" he said in

> "Didn't you?"puerled his wife, opening her eyes. "Well, you didn't say so."
> " I'm not obliged to say so," replied her husband, angirly. "Well," she continued, "since I've bet,

drew no cards?"

why I've bet. I can't take it back again "Certainly not." was the reply; "and just to teach you a lesson, and to make you more careful in future I'll raise

"I'll raise you back," was the reply. ly, and I drew sone. When will you ever and she did. Her husband by this time was the

ploture of impatient amazement. "You drew four cards," he said stern-ly and I drew none. Will you Then he "raised" her again, and she raised him in return.

He looked around the table in an apolegetic and pitying way.
Emma is a splendid girl at most things," he said. "but when it comes to card playing she makes me very weary."
Then he doubled her bet, and she doubled in his return.

"Oh, this is absurd," he cried; "there's no use winning money from my own wife; I'll just call you. I've got a flush, ace high."
And I've got four kings," replied his

wife, as she raked in the ivory "chips." And then a roar of laughter shook the room, while the man who knew all abot the game looked very sheepish,

WHERE IT IS REALLY COLD. Country Where a Lighted Candle Finds it Very Hard to keep Warm. rom the Popular Science News.

Cold is merely a relative term. The resident of semi-tropical countries shivers when the thermometer drops to 50 colors, and a degrees, while the Laplander and Es- \$2.25 outfit. pulmau think it is comfortable at zero. For real cold and plenty of it one must go to the Polar regions. Think of liv ing where the mercury goes down to % degrees below zero in the house, in spite of the stove. Of course, in such a case, fur garments are piled on until a man looks like a great bundle of

Dr. Moss, of the Polar expedition of 1875-76, among other odd things, tells of the effect of cold on a wax candle which he burned there. The temperature was 35 degrees below zero; and the doctor must have been considerably discouraged when upon looking at his candle, he discovered that the flame had all it

could do to keep warm.

It was so cold that the flame could not melt all the wax of the candle, but was forced to cut its way down, leaving a sort of skeleton of the candle standing. There was heat enough , however, to melt oddly-shaped holes in the thin walls of wax, and the result was a beautiful lace-like cylinder of white, with a tongue of yellow flame burning inside it, and sending out into the darkness many streaks of light.

THE WORD "SUCH." Wrong Uses to Which It Is Commonly

"I have never before seen such a large ox." By a little transposing of the words of this sentence we have, "I have never before seen an ox such large," which makes it quite clear that we should say so large an ox and not such a large ox. As proof that this error in the use of such is common, we find in Mr. George Washington Moon's "Dean's English and Bad English," the sen ence, "With all due deference to such a high authority on such a very import ant matter." With a little transposing. this sentence is made to read, "With all due deference to an authority such high on a matter such very important." It is clear that the sentence should read. "With all due deference to so high an authority on so very important a matter." The phrases, such a handsome, such a lovely, such a long, such narrow, etc., are incorrect, and should be so handsome, so lovely, so long, and so on.—Alfred Ayres.

Baffled. Chappie-"Aw there deah chappie; I hardly expected to find you at the club today. What's up?" Algie - "Everything. I've given up.
That's what's the matter."
Chapple-"Given up? Good gwacious,
deah boy, you don't mean to say that
your'e going to quit us?"
Alkie-"That's just it."

Chapple—"Why, you've been the great-est monochronic-manise of us all. What will we do for a leader without the white plume of Navarre and all that sort of thing we used to hear about at college?" Algie-"Can't help it; I'm done for, old

Chappie—"Why, what do you mean?"
Algie—"Why, just this. Haven't I
bought all my clothes in London?"
Chappie—"Yes; that's English, you

Algie-"And turned up my trousers and played golf and yelled for the Val-kyrle III., and the Cambridge athletes and all that sort of thing?"
Chapple—"Yes, that was correct English, y'know."

Algie-"Well, just at the end I have some to the limit of my resources." Chappie-"Aw, you don't mean it, deah Algie-"I do. I have discovered that I

Chapple-"Poor boy." Algie-"Yes-and I've go to remain poor. That's just what's the matter."— Tom Hall in Truth.

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An Import order placed Oat Meal Sets. way last winter. The goods promised for this spring's trade. They did not arrive Bowl and Plate. You ought trade. They did not arrive to have a set of these for each until this month. Too late for us to use them we wrote member of the family. Not vexed tone. "It does seem to me that women haven't any sense. What made you raise me? Didn't you see that I your own price was the reply. We did. They are 9 inch meal is served in an appetizing dinner plates, real china, the thinnest kind. Edges scalloped and of gilt, dainty floral more than cheap at decorations in delicate colors. Every plate perfect, no seconds. These ought to bring Smoking Sets.

10c. each.

There's a few more of keep him in evenings. those tea sets left. You know which I mean; the \$5.00 kind that we are selling at

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35c. for the set. Worth 75c.

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15c.

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E. W. MULLIGAN, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
Agents for the Repaumo Chemical Com-